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Personal problems haunt Durenberger

First of two parts.

By George Archibald
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With his personal life apparently in a shambles, Sen. David Durenberger's key role as a chief overseer of the nation's intelligence network is being questioned privately on Capitol Hill and within the intelligence community.

The Republican chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has undergone psychological counseling after leaving his wife

of 14 years and after having had an extramarital affair with a 28-year-old former secretary, he has acknowledged in recent interviews.

About a year ago, Mr. Durenberger, 51, moved out of his \$279,000 home near the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Va., where his wife, Penny, and four sons from a previous marriage still live, according to former staff members and friends of the senator.

Mr. Durenberger's marital split followed earlier family turmoil involving frequent drug use by his two oldest sons, now 21 and 22, who underwent professional counseling to end their dependency, he told re-

porters for the Minneapolis Star-Tribune and the Knight-Ridder newspaper chain.

The senator also said in the interviews he is under counseling, but declined to elaborate.

"Yes, there is someone [a psychologist] he goes to in Boston," said Karen L. Doyne, Mr. Durenberger's press secretary. "It's primarily for marriage counseling."

Some of Mr. Durenberger's public behavior also has drawn attention recently.

He was arrested for disorderly conduct Jan. 14 at Boston's Logan Airport following a dispute with police after he jumped the cab line. Police said he argued that he was a U.S. senator who had to make "important appointments." A local magistrate later dismissed the case, ruling that the police complaint was "without grounds."

Miss Doyne would not say whether the senator had flown to Boston for a session with his psychologist.

"He was in Boston to give a speech," she said. "I don't know what other appointments he might have had."

For the past year, the Minnesota senator has lived at a Christian fellowship house in Arlington called the Cedars, described by supporters as an evangelical ministry aimed at people in leadership positions from throughout the world.

The luxuriously furnished colonial-style mansion on the bluffs above the Potomac River is operated by the Fellowship Foundation, run

by Doug Coe, who for over a decade has ministered to business executives, senior U.S. government officials and diplomats from other countries.

"Doug Coe brought Chuck Colson [former Nixon adviser convicted in the Watergate case] to Christ," said an administration official.

The official said the foundation "has no political stripe" and is "Bible-centered, evangelical [and] orthodox from a theological perspective."

"I'd say Durenberger is probably feeling a lot of guilt, a lot of shame, and is probably very low on himself right now," he said. "At Cedars, the aim is to lift him up, undergird him and get him reconciled with his wife."

Mr. Durenberger, who declined to be interviewed for this article, said he intended to stay out of the public eye when he became Intelligence Committee chairman 14 months ago.

Instead, he and Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy, the panel's Democratic vice chairman, have used their positions to be outspoken on foreign policy issues and to criticize U.S. clandestine operations overseas.

Mr. Durenberger has publicly led the fight against covert aid to anti-communist resistance forces in Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Angola. But he suggested U.S. covert action in the Philippines to destabilize the regime of Ferdinand Marcos and force his resignation, months before the former Filipino president fled his country.

Mr. Durenberger's public statements recently prompted CIA Di-

rector William Casey to accuse him of compromising national security. Now, revelations of the Minnesotan's marital and emotional difficulties have raised questions about the possible damage his problems might do to the trust relationship that exists between congressional overseers of secret intelligence operations and the 19 U.S. intelligence agencies led by the CIA.

Present and former intelligence committee members refused to comment on Mr. Durenberger's specific situation, saying they were unaware of his problems before the recent publicity.

But generally, they said, lawmakers who have emotional and psychological problems should be denied access to national secrets and barred from intelligence committees, to preserve the credibility of Congress' important oversight responsibility.

"When you get playing around with another woman, that can cause

problems [that might compromise national secrets] probably more than being on narcotics," said Sen. Barry Goldwater, Arizona Republican, who preceded Mr. Durenberger as chairman of the Senate intelligence panel.

Both Congress and the administration face a dilemma following Mr. Durenberger's public admission of his emotional difficulties, said Sen. Malcolm Wallop, Wyoming Republican, who left the Intelligence Committee in 1985 after serving eight years.

"There I think that you've really got the intelligence community in a very difficult situation, because Congress is very thin-skinned about its general reliability," said Mr. Wallop. "It [Congress] will state till hell freezes over that it is totally reliable in both houses, and yet we know of instances where it has not been."

"And this intelligence community is under one obligation to be forthcoming and another obligation

to be able to deliver its services and the capabilities to the country that it's designed to do," Mr. Wallop said. "But it strikes me that if there are those who elicit concerns to the community that they then ought to meet with the leadership [of Congress] and discuss it."

"I understand those concerns," Mrs. Durenberger said in a brief discussion at her home. "I [once] worked for the National Security Agency. I know the security concerns. We were always so very careful about people with debts or alcohol problems and so forth."

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